DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 077 CS 012 390

AUTHOR Graham, Peg; Hudson-Ross, Sally
TITLE Teacher Candidate Research on Literacy in High School Classrooms. Instructional Resource No. 19.
INSTITUTION National Reading Research Center, Athens, GA.; National Reading Research Center, College Park, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 96
CONTRACT 117A20007
NOTE 42p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Action Research; Higher Education; High Schools; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Research Methodology; Research Skills; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Collaborative Inquiry; Teacher Researchers; University of Georgia

ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in teacher research and action research as ways of knowing about teaching and learning, but assisting preservice and inservice teachers to become teacher researchers has not traditionally been accommodated by teacher education programs. The model English education program at the University of Georgia has sought to address that oversight by developing a collaborative inquiry approach in which mentor-teachers and university instructors design research experiences for preservice teachers across a yearlong experience. Teacher candidates inquire into their own apprenticeship of observation prior to collecting data in their students as members of adolescent culture, as language users, and as readers and writers. This paper describes how one group of teacher candidates gained experience with classroom inquiry, research questions, data collection methods, and data analysis in an effort to connect theory and practice about learning to teach. Contains 24 references and a figure listing insights gained through research. Appendixes provide a brief description of four projects, instructions for writing a learner profile, the rubric for learner profiles, data analysis techniques, response forms, excerpts from journal entries, a research assignment on student writers, a chart to structure data collection, excerpts from analyses of writers autobiographies, instructions for writing a reader profile/autobiography, and excerpts from completed readers' autobiographies. (Author/RS)

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Teacher Candidate Research on Literacy in High School Classrooms

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Instructional Resource No. 19
Winter 1996

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Teacher-Candidate Research on Literacy in High School Classrooms

Peg Graham
Sally Hudson-Ross
University of Georgia

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE NO. 19
Winter 1996

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The National Reading Research Center (NRRC) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research on reading and reading instruction. The NRRC is operated by a consortium of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland College Park in collaboration with researchers at several institutions nationwide.

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About the Authors

Peg Graham is Assistant Professor of Language Education at the University of Georgia. She received her doctorate in English education at the University of Iowa after teaching English in public high schools for 17 years. Her research focuses on the conceptualization of mentoring roles and the influence of power, knowledge, and gender on mentor-teacher/student-teacher relationships. She has been a trainer of teacher assessors for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Early Adolescence/English Language Arts and a member of the redesign team for EA/ELA assessments for NBPTS certified teachers.

Sally Hudson-Ross works primarily with secondary preservice teachers and their mentor teachers in local high schools through the Language Education department at the University of Georgia. In 1993–1994, Sally exchanged jobs with Patti McWhorter, a local English teacher and department chair in another NRRC project entitled The SYNERGY Project. Insights they gained from doing one another's jobs as teacher educator and high school teacher for a year directly influenced the Collaborative Inquiry Project reported here. Details of the SYNERGY Project are reported in other NRRC reports.

Teacher-Candidate Research on Literacy in High School Classrooms

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National Reading Research Center
Universities of Georgia and Maryland
Instructional Resource No. 19
Winter 1996

Abstract. *In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in teacher research and action research as ways of knowing about teaching and learning, but assisting preservice and inservice teachers to become teacher-researchers has not traditionally been accommodated by teacher education programs. The model program in English education at the University of Georgia has sought to address that oversight by developing a collaborative inquiry approach in which mentor-teachers and university instructors design research experiences for preservice teachers across a yearlong experience. Teacher candidates inquire into their own apprenticeship of observation prior to collecting data on their students as members of adolescent culture, as language users, and as readers and writers. This paper describes how one group of teacher candidates gained experience with classroom inquiry, research questions, data collection methods, and data analysis in an effort to connect theory and practice about learning to teach.*

In "The Devil and Research," Richard Lloyd-Jones (1986) defines a researcher as "merely a person who looks very carefully and then reports very carefully what has been seen so that others will believe it is a useful way of looking" (p. 5). As teacher educators who are interested in the concept of "learning to teach," we have investigated how to promote these ways of looking and reporting (Flanders et al., 1987; Carson, 1990; Shulman, 1986) among our teacher candidates and the mentor teachers who work with them. Through teacher research experiences, preservice and veteran teachers alike uncover theories that have enabled them to make sense of the events in their classroom, offering them opportunities to investigate their preconceptions about how to organize learning for students (Lloyd-Jones, 1986) and question how they have constructed their theories.

Much has been written about the intuitive screens (Goodman, 1988), metaphors (Munby & Russell, 1990; Tobin, 1990) and apprenticeships of observation (Grossman, 1990; Lortie, 1975) which influence the images, beliefs, and theories of teaching brought to teacher education programs by preservice teachers. In many cases, these theories are based upon a narrow band of experiences and stories, particularly if the preservice teachers have school experiences limited to the honors track, for example. In our experience, these theories are sometimes so strong that teacher candidates (and experienced teachers, too) choose their facts to fit their theories, washing out the influence of professional literature and research. Furthermore, these theories are often based on personal histories and biographical data (Goodson,

1994) or institutional constraints which means they may not add up to a coherent theory of learning but instead become a set of competing or eclectic theories (Brown & Rose, 1995; Wiggins & Clift, 1995). As a result, we have found it important to create experiences for teacher candidates which invite them to look carefully at learners and classrooms, report carefully what they have seen, and determine how those practical experiences modify the theories they bring with them as they undertake the complex process of learning to become teachers (Rodriguez, 1993).

Project Description and Goals

We team-taught an entire year of courses (25 hours) with 20 teacher candidates as part of an NRRC research project. Teacher candidates received their placements with mentor teachers during the summer with 1 or 2 of the 25 mentor teachers who had applied to participate in the project. Placements lasted throughout the year, with teacher candidates spending 12 hours a week Fall and Winter quarters in their mentor teacher's classroom while taking 15 hours of university classes. In the Spring, teacher candidates assumed full-time student teaching responsibilities.

The teacher candidates, both undergraduate and master's-level students, were placed with their mentor teachers in August during preplanning. At that time, they were assigned four classroom-based projects. Teacher candidates read Hubbard and Power's *The Art of Classroom Inquiry* (1993) to become better acquainted with various classroom-research methodologies. Each project was designed to build upon teacher-candidate research skills and to connect what they were reading at the university (Atwell, 1987; Beach & Marshall, 1991; Kirby & Liner, 1988; Foster, 1994; etc.) with what they were experiencing in the classroom, effectively creating a link between theory and practice, emphasizing how practice modifies theory. The yearlong placement increased the likelihood that teacher candidates would have ample time to conduct their research, become familiar with their students, acquaint themselves with the class curriculum, and establish a professional working relationship with their mentor teachers. The project goals focused on the principle that by conducting research that focused on the students in their classrooms, teacher candidates learned how to observe children (Condon, Clyde, Kyle, & Hovda, 1993) and make important curricular and instructional decisions throughout their careers.

Planning with Mentor Teachers

In order to make sure that we did not simply impose an agenda on the student teachers that would disrupt the mentor teachers' classroom, we met throughout the summer with the mentors to discuss what kinds of research experiences would be important for the teacher candidates (TCs) to have. Before the summer was over, we had designed four projects (Appendix A) that would allow TCs to gain experience with classroom inquiry and different data collection methods. In addition, we wanted to discuss how the mentors and teacher educators could support those research experiences and to make sure we knew enough about teacher research to guide TCs as they

began their investigations. As a group, we read John Mayher's *Uncommon Sense* (1990), to expand our discussion of classroom innovations, and Cochran-Smith and Lytle's *Inside/Outside* (1993), to read about formal and informal inquiries other teachers and student teachers had carried out. In this way, mentors might offer better models of teacher-researchers to their TCs and assume a counseling role (Anderson & Shannon, 1988) as TCs conducted their inquiries.

In retrospect, we needed to study the basics of classroom research more carefully, perhaps reading Hubbard and Power's *The Art of Classroom Inquiry* as carefully with the mentor teachers as we did with the TCs. Many teachers were unfamiliar with any kind of systematic data collection, in spite of their sustained exposure to informal research. Even though we had discussed what constituted "data" and the different methods for collecting and analyzing that data, we discovered as the year progressed that many of our mentor teachers were still uncomfortable and confounded by the idea of teacher research. By the end of the year, they were able to admit that they had struggled along with the TCs to conduct research in their classrooms. Many mentors had found it difficult to function as good partners for the collaborative research projects which were initiated after TCs completed the four assigned projects. In many cases, the TCs were less dependent upon their mentors, assuming a role of an independent equal or leader (Gehrke, 1988) in the collaborative research projects. However, with this first year of research experience behind them, the mentor teachers felt more confident in their ability to help future TCs to pose good research questions and determine the best methods for collecting and analyzing information.

Becoming Teacher-Researchers: Process and Product

In each of four research projects, TCs used a different type of classroom-research methodology to acquire information from students. In their university classroom, TCs were exposed to a "data display" Sally had created. They visited different "stations" and had the chance to see how she had collected, analyzed, and shaped data for her own research. We suggested methods that would render useful data for each of the four projects, but TCs had the opportunity to expand their data sources if they wished. After collecting data for a particular project, TCs returned to the university setting to share and analyze their information. Part of that information was taken from autobiographical profiles in which TCs focused on their own experiences as learners within adolescent culture, as readers and writers in secondary schools. By incorporating these personal inquiries into the classroom research, TCs were able to compare and contrast their personal histories with their students' experience while also investigating the sources of the theories influencing their image of teacher.

Our intention was to structure the assignments enough that TCs would have similar types of information to categorize, compare, and contrast in their analyses. As TCs gained more experience and confidence with the role of researcher, we relinquished more and more of the process to them. The final project on

reading culminated in TCs devising a method of data analysis they thought would be more efficient and effective, based upon their experiences with the three preceding research projects.

Project #1 Adolescent Culture: Students and Self

The first project had two parts. In phase one, we asked TCs to write a learner profile for themselves (Appendix B), pushing them to reflect upon how they perceived themselves as learners within the culture of adolescence in high school. Prior to writing the profiles, TCs devised a rubric which helped them to focus on the most important aspects of the profile (Appendix C). The second phase of the project directed TCs to interview students about their lives within the culture of school and adolescence. The assignment we gave them offered ideas for the kinds of information TCs might try to elicit from students:

> Interview student(s) about their lives within the culture of school and adolescence. Write a student profile or a set of student profiles. [What influences those students? With which groups or cliques do they identify? What blocks or facilitates their learning and sense of well being? What patterns emerge across the adolescent profiles we compile? How are those patterns different from or similar to the patterns you have identified as influential on your own adolescence and high school experience? Of what importance are these insights to teaching and learning in specific schools/classrooms?]

Although we indicated the kind of information they should try to glean, TCs created interview questions on their own, experimenting with questions that prompt elaboration from interviewees and structured versus semi-structured formats. From those interviews, TCs wrote one or more student profiles which they shared with other TCs.

The discussion and analysis of the data was not formally structured at this point, but TCs were asked to identify recurrent themes and patterns of response which they reflected upon in their dialogue journals.

Project #2 Adolescent Culture: Student Discourse/Language

The 15 hours we team-taught included a course in language issues. As a means of broaching topics such as teaching Standard English and fostering respect for the language variations of students, we asked TCs to audiotape student conversations in the cafeteria, the classroom, or the hallways in order to study students' language in different situations. TCs audiotaped or videotaped talk among one or more groups of students in situations that ranged from very formal to relatively informal exchanges. With the assistance of the students who participated in the exchanges, TCs transcribed 5–10 min excerpts from the talk. In an extended journal entry, TCs analyzed the transcription data, using questions we had devised to prompt their reflections on the the data (Appendix D). With partners, they noted language patterns across their own and peers' samples, striving to make connections and appreciate the usefulness of sharing findings

with fellow researchers. We facilitated that by creating a response form that TCs filled out after conferring with partners in the university class (Appendix E). After collecting transcript data and journal entries about language patterns from all of the teacher-researchers, Sally and Peg selected and published excerpts from all of the samples, clustering them under category headings as a model for how TCs might organize data (Appendix F).

Project #3 Student Writers/Self as Writer

As TCs gained experience with how to conduct research, we expanded their options for methods and sources of data and imposed more structure on analyzing the data they brought back to the university. As always, we asked TCs to think about their own experiences as writers before asking them to investigate their students as writers. They wrote a writer's autobiography and then were given a research assignment on student writers (Appendix G). Working from these different data sources—writing samples and interviews of more proficient and less proficient student writers, and their own writing autobiographies—individual TCs worked with partners to analyze the data. We provided a chart (Appendix H) which structured how they would select and record important data, emphasizing that they quote directly from the data as we had modeled for them with the Language Research Project. They selected excerpts from their data which they deemed important and wrote them down on blocks on the blank chart. Then coupled with a partner, they combined their data and devised advice for writing teachers implied by their findings. In addition to discovering overlaps in what their data revealed about more and less proficient student writers, the teacher-researchers collaborated on making the teacherly turn toward implications for practice, a turn which facilitated their shift from student to teacher.

When they had completed their charts, TCs turned in their findings and their advice to us. We compiled all of the excerpts and advice in a chart we typed (Appendix I) and then returned them to the TCs, asking them to read all of the data and implications from all of their classmates before writing marginalia, a means of discovering main points and trends across all of the samples. Immersing themselves in the data this way provided them with perspectives from every teacher-researcher in the class. As a culminating activity, we asked them to write an extended journal rather than some sort of formal report. We hoped they would be able to express their insights in ways that would help them to apply the findings to their own students and classrooms.

TCs organized their reflections in many different ways in the extended journal, but Bill's list of "Common Threads" at the end of his entry offers a sample of the kinds of insight they derived from the research (see Figure 1).

Project #4 Student Readers/Self as Reader

Bill and the other TCs anticipated their Reading Research Project with an air of confidence they had not had at the beginning of the quarter. As had become our habit, we assigned an autobiographical profile of the TC as a reader (Appendix J) before launching into

Common Threads

The following are common threads or thoughts that surfaced throughout the data. Some of these threads did not surprise me, while others caught me off guard.

1. *Free choice*: I've talked about the issue before, so I won't elaborate. I thought this idea might surface in the data. Students want some significant *amount of control*. I think this is a wonderful thing because it may heighten interest, develop a voice and create works that the student is willing to spend a significant amount of time with. We can use this tool, but we have to be careful not to abuse it or become a victim of its power.

2. *Computers*: There is not a whole lot to be said about this one. Computers are becoming the pen and paper of this generation. I am not 100% computer competent, so that's a drawback. But I am learning. The *students at CSHS help me with the computer in Beth's room*. They get a real kick out of helping a future teacher.

3. *Exhibiting works*: All students, regardless of ability, like to see their work on exhibition. This leads directly to my last two points: insecurity/pride.

4. *Insecurity* and *lack of pride*: This is the one that surprised me. (These are not meant to be statements. Not all of the students exhibit these qualities.) Even the most advanced writer, along with the least proficient, shows a substantial amount of *insecurity* and *lack of pride* in their writing. I think this is due to the following factors:

   a. Writing is *personal*. It is concrete evidence of one's thoughts. Writers fear judgments of right or wrong, and good or bad. At the high school age, students are discovering a lot about themselves and to translate those discoveries to paper would be wonderful, but extremely risky for that age group.

   b. We, as students, have not been guided/pushed/shoved down avenues involving creativity or imagination. We *have been taught to use formulas* in writing, formulas that dictate right or wrong. Instead of standing back, reading a piece of your writing and saying, "Yes! That's great! That is exactly how I feel at this moment in time," we usually reread our piece, checking our adherence to format, structure and saying, "What will the teacher think when she/he reads this?"

   c. I think I discovered something very interesting in our data collection sheets. *Our word choice subtly differs in the "advice to teachers" section in regards to less proficient and more proficient writers*.

5. *The language we use*.
   Less Proficient: I see the word "*encourage*" over and over again. This supports the role of the teacher. We must let these less avid writers know that we are on their side. We want them to do their best, we will support them along the process, we will guide them out of dead-end streets or trouble areas; we will let them know that it is okay to get "stuck" or "lost." We are part of the support team.
   More Proficient: With this group of writers we use words like "*engage*," "*stress*," and "*clarify*." We, as teachers take on a *more active role*. We challenge the students to challenge themselves. We allow them to explore the nooks and crannies of the process. We push them towards a clear voice and/or style.

I learned a lot via this data. However, it will be nice to set it aside for a little while. I feel overloaded in the brain department. I'm not sure if I can write about writing for a couple days. Hopefully, writing about reading will be a different story.

—Bill Gabelhausen

Figure 1. Excerpt from extended journal writing assignment showing a sample of insights gained through research

research on student readers. Embedded within the directions for the reading autobiography were explicit statements about how the profile would contribute to the data base we would create for the whole class of TC researchers. Again, we wanted to offer TCs more control over how they designed their studies. As a group, we discussed what kind of questions we had about student readers and their reading habits, the kind of data that would inform our research questions, and the methods of data collection that would render the information we sought. They decided that reading surveys and interviews with students about reading would be most fruitful. Most of the TCs had become convinced of the power of asking directly for student input and had good examples of surveys their teachers had administered about reading interests at the beginning of the school year. Some opted to use that existing data. Others opted to design another reading survey to get more specific or different kinds of data. This time we needed no assignment sheet dictating what to do: TCs had begun to take ownership of the research they conducted.

Based upon their prior experience with research, TCs were asked to brainstorm a list of ideas about how to approach the reading research project most productively. Through that discussion, they focused most pointedly on the analysis stage, seeking to streamline their approach to making sense of the data they compiled. They came up with the following list of ideas for that phase of their research.

- Use "chart blocks" again (to control for overwriting), but add a heading or label to each to facilitate organizing the data and discovering patterns.
- Put the name of each researcher on the excerpts to facilitate referral to specific data and to identify the original researcher for verification or elaboration of data.
- Meet with a second pair of researchers and label data excerpts together.
- Use separate strips of paper for the chart blocks so similar headings can be grouped together more easily.
- Cluster related excerpts/chart blocks from each researcher group by patterns and type.
- Continue to use marginalia as a means to identify trends across data samples.

TCs returned to their school classroom to administer the surveys they devised and to conduct individual and small group interviews. Then TCs returned to the university to analyze the data they had collected: autobiographies, surveys, transcripts of interviews, even a videotape of one small group (Perry, 1994). In pairs, TCs compared their findings. As they talked, they wrote down on slips of paper the important excerpts that emerged from the data. Gradually, they exhausted all of the data and reached all insights they could. Then each pair joined another pair of TCs and shared their findings. When both groups detected a similar pattern, they grouped that data together under a single heading such as "School Reading Assignments vs Pleasure Reading" or "Gender Preferences" or "Text Selection."

Gradually, over 3 hrs, TCs made sense of their data and added to each pattern an implication for teachers. We collected their work and typed it up in a chart (Appendix K) which we then distributed to all of the TCs. Because these teacher-researchers had learned to organize their data more efficiently, the process of reflecting upon those findings was also easier. Again, they wrote marginalia on the chart and wrote about their discoveries in their dialogue journals, directing their attention to what these findings implied for their classroom practice. A sampling of those journal entries indicates what they theorized about readers and students' experiences with literature in school:

[T]here are trends which succeeding generations of students follow . . . it was not just Nick and my own reader biographies which were similar to the students at our respective high schools, it was everyone's. Regardless of school, level, or any other factor, the observations . . . demonstrate at least two ideas: students read what they find interesting, and students seem to develop in stages or phases.

—Mace Gunter

My one belief left standing firm after reading the "Insights" about readers is that anybody, *no matter what kind of background they have or academic skill level they're at, can be a lover of reading if they meet with the right book at the right time. . . .*

[T]he other major issue which concerns me is helping students choose literature that's appropriate and appealing to them. I'm afraid my knowledge is very limited, and it's difficult to know what might just fit.

—Clare Marks (pseudonym)

I realized something that at least partially explained the distaste for reading that I had encountered in so many students. "Many of the students said they don't like to read, and would then say something about how they liked to read Stephen King books or books about art, etc. It's almost like they think if they don't like to read 'classics', they don't like to read at all."

This really opened my eyes to what was going on in the classroom. Students who were reading magazines, newspapers, 500-page John Grisham books, etc. were claiming to be nonreaders, because what they read was entertaining and not "worthy" of being taught in school. I am still not sure what exactly can be done to change this attitude, but I feel strongly that letting students choose their own books to read in and for school is a step in the right direction. While this is not an ultimate solution, it is a way to send students the message that all books are important, not just those written by authors such as Shakespeare, and Melville. I know that there is a time and place for these classics, but at the same time, I strongly believe that it will take much more than those to turn a nonreader on to reading.

—Jennifer Mc Duffie

Conclusions

Although our TCs were placed in six different schools in five different school districts which served extremely different communities—rural to urban to suburban--their research with students supported what we had been reading in the professional literature. For example, the Reading Research Projects strongly supported teaching reading and litera-

ture that is attuned to student needs and interests, offers students choices, and is purposeful. The student readers emphasized how important parents and friends are as influences on their reading, and students offered insights into how to teach in supportive and challenging ways. Given the preponderance of data they had collected as primary investigators in their own classrooms, TCs expanded their experiences with learners different from themselves and in the process modified the theories that informed their images of what effective teachers do and how students learn.

The power of the teacher research for TCs is located in the voices of their students. Through formal and informal research methods which allowed them to see and hear their students more clearly, TCs were able to revise assumptions and expectations they had brought to their teacher education program. As a result, these future teachers were able to connect the theoretical and the practical, exploring how one informs the other as they began to plan lessons for their first teaching experiences. Throughout the rest of the program, TCs automatically returned to the research methods they had been exposed to as they assumed more and more responsibility for teaching, uncovering questions and dilemmas they could only answer by observing and listening to their students. They had convinced themselves that teacher research was a "useful way of looking" and learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Short Term Assignments: Athens Field Center
1994-95

Strands/Themes: Adolescent Culture
Self as Learner/Autobiography
Student Perspectives
Diversity
Teaching as Inquiry

*1. **Adolescent Culture: Students & Self*** (Due_____)

Interview student(s) about their lives within the culture of school and adolescence. Write a student profile or a set of student profiles. [What influences those students? With which groups or cliques do they identify? What blocks or facilitates their learning and sense of well being? What patterns emerge across the adolescent profiles we compile? How are those patterns different from or similar to the patterns you have identified as influential on your own adolescence and high school experience? Of what importance are these insights to teaching and learning in specific schools/classrooms?]

*2. **Adolescent Culture: Student Discourse/Language*** (Due_____)

Audiotape or videotape talk among a group of students in situations that range from very formal to relatively informal exchanges. As you transcribe that talk, ask the group of students to assist you in the transcription. [What distinguishes the students' language and dialect from that of the mainstream culture? Of what importance is that dialect to the students? What can the students say about the etymology of particular terms? In what way(s) is that language inclusive or exclusive? What patterns do you notice across the language samples you transcribe? Of what importance is that information to your understanding of your students? Who controls the conversation? How? How and when does turn taking occur? How can you use those insights to serve you in the classroom? What value would there be in working collaboratively with your students on the transcription process? How might the transcriptions heighten students' awareness of rhetorical choices they make?]

*3. **Student Perspective: Self as Writer*** (Due_____)

Analyze samples of student writing or a body of writing by a single student in an effort to gain insight into student writers. Conduct follow-up interviews of individual student writers to add to

your assessment and aid you in composing writer profiles for individual students or classes. [What insights do we gain by talking to students about how they perceive themselves as writers? What do student writers identify as most productive practices? Least productive practices? How does that align with your experiences as a high school writer? Of what value is this information to teaching and learning? What patterns emerge across diverse student profiles?]

*4. **Student Perspective: Self as Reader*** (Due_____)

Prepare and administer a survey of student readers' interests and habits. Analyze to determine prevailing patterns among students. Interview student(s) about their perceptions of themselves as readers. [How do students' public and private/school and home uses of literacy converge or diverge? What kinds of things do they like to read? Under what circumstances? What do they want to do after they've read something? What associations do they make with school reading? How are those preferences and patterns of reading different from or similar to the memories and experiences you have of reading in high school? What patterns emerge across diverse student reader profiles? Of what importance are these insights to reading practices in specific schools/classrooms?]

**Based upon these experiences, we will develop questions to guide our study for the rest of the quarter.*

APPENDIX B

Learner Profile/Adolescent Culture Assignment

Due date_____

Purpose

Teacher candidates in English education are often the high school students who did course work exclusively on an accelerated or advanced placement track. They have viewed themselves as motivated learners or, at the very least, students who were willing to follow the teacher's directions and turn in work on time because they took education seriously. We would like you to reflect deeply about the kind of learner you perceived yourself to be in high school and how others might have perceived you.

Possible questions to consider: Did those perceptions match the reality? Did you belong to any school cliques or special interest groups? What did those associations have to do with the kind of student you became? Of what influence was your community/social standing? How did that shape your learning goals? What classes did you take and why? Who were your closest classmates? How did your high school teachers teach? Which methods did you find most beneficial? Why? What recognition did you receive as a literacy learner? Was there a difference between the learning you did at home and at school? What were your favorite classes and why? What kind of support did you receive from family? What changes in attitude or outlook on learning do you recall going through? What influenced those changes?

By reminding yourself of your unique developmental process and examining how your development may or may not translate to the experiences of most high school students, you place yourself in the position to draw better inferences about your students as learners in a complex school society. Try to conclude your piece with some speculations about how your learner history shapes your images of teaching and learning.

Audience

We envision two distinct audiences—you and your university/public school colleagues. In both cases, readers should come away from the piece feeling that they have a little better insight into the kind of learner you were in high school, the forces influencing you along the way, and your beliefs about teaching and learning that grow from your experiences.

Procedure

1. You only have a week to write the learner profile, so you'll want to get started soon. Consider the scope of the paper. Do you want to focus on only the highlights of your high school experiences? Do you want to give a blow-by-blow description of every event that has influenced you? Every teacher? Every book or class? Every turning point? Do you want to relate your history in some sort of chronological order or do you have something else in mind? If you think about your material, you can probably make some of these decisions about organizing principles.

2. Most of you have an emerging sense of your own writing process, but if you have trouble getting started and don't know what to write, you may want to consider some of the following ideas:

- Write several 20 minute freewrites that focus on various stages of your learning history or turning points in that history.

- Begin "Well, it seems to me that . . ." Sometimes a more informal, personal approach will open the floodgates for you.

- Brainstorm a list of things you might want to include in your personal learning history. Cluster those items into categories that might provide a working outline for your writing.

- Talk to a partner. Let your conversation begin with some high school reminiscing—what you remember most vividly, the embarrassing adolescent moments, the poetry writing contest you won, prom night, gym class, your part-time job, etc.

3. Once you have some drafting done, share those scribblings with a trusted reader. Think about some questions or concerns that you might like the reader to address for you in his/her response.

4. Consider those suggestions. Decide if you need to go back to brainstorm more ideas, delete, elaborate, whatever. And then try again. Remember that writing is a recursive process, not a neat linear sequence for everyone.

5. Type the paper. Be prepared to meet the deadline we established.

Evaluation: As a group, you will develop a rubric for evaluating your learner profile. [It might help to think in terms of how this piece of writing would differ from the weekly "Think Piece," for example.]

APPENDIX C

Rubric for Learner Profiles

Checkpoints: Learner Profile
EEN 706/707/709

Writer_____ Date_____

Scoring Scale: 5—Excellent 4—Good 3—Fair/Satisfactory 2 1

Content 5 4 3 2 1 × 9 = ____

(The piece contains complete information about the writer as a learner. Details and examples are included.) (45%)

Application 5 4 3 2 1 × 9 = ____

(The writer has connected his/her learning experiences with classroom teaching.) (45%)

Mechanics/
Usage 5 4 3 2 1 × 2 = ____

(This piece is free from errors in mechanics and usage.) (10%)

TOTAL (100) ____

Comments:

APPENDIX D

Student Language Research Project
Analysis of Data

Transcript

You have transcribed 5–10 minutes of student conversation, having selected portions of the audiotape/videotape that contained lively exchanges between two or more participants. In the transcripts, you have tried to get down the actual words as they were spoken, including repetitions and pauses and interruptions.

Analysis

You may want to begin your student language analysis by answering some of the questions listed below. Although not every question will apply to the conversation you have transcribed, many of them are generic enough to address many different speech situations. Please add to the list of questions since the list is not exhaustive.

- What are the characteristics of the participants in the conversation you taped? [location; age, education, sex, social position; racial/ethnic identity; other significant characteristics]
- What was the occasion for the conversation? Upon what topics did the participants focus?
- Do they use identifiable genres? [stories, jokes, prayers, admonitions, insults]
- What distinguishes the students' language and dialect from that of the mainstream culture? Be specific. Note diction, syntax, sentence structure, etc. Of what importance is that dialect to the students? Why?
- What can the students say about the etymology of particular terms? What terms were unfamiliar to you?
- What community values or aspects of community culture seem to be represented in this conversation? In what way(s) is the language they are using inclusive or exclusive?
- What do you notice about patterns of language use across individuals participating in the conversation? What variations? Commonalities?

- Of what importance is all of this information to understanding your students, their language facility, and their language needs?
- How can you use those insights to serve you in the classroom? What implications does it have for what you teach and how you teach it?
- Of what value would it have been to have students assist in the transcription process? **or** Why was it helpful to have students assist in the transcription process?
- What accounts for the rhetorical choices students made during their conversation?

APPENDIX E

Language Research Project

Making Connections

Researcher_____ Reader_____

Language Analysis Project
Date:

List three connections you detect in this researcher's language project and your own.

-
-
-

Describe one aspect of the research you considered to be particularly good/interesting/thought provoking/useful.

How does this research inform practice?

APPENDIX F

Language Analysis Project

Language Analysis Projects: Our initial insights *10/15/94*

Informal Talk

The conversation between MM, MB, and CF seems to be sexual in nature as the prompt for MM asking about MB's afternoon seems to be the fact that MB concluded his whistling with a wolf whistle. This, coupled with the phrase "It's not . . . not even hairy" leads me to believe the conversation could be about a sexual conquest. (John) Teachers make educated guesses based on knowledge of their students. What else do you know about these students that might lead you to your conclusion? (Peg's response to John)

The students do not deviate from the mainstream culture in their dialect. The use of "I'm sure" by KR, "I had a case of mental lapse" by MB, "What is this deal" by MB, and the use of "like" as a filler word by MM, all fit what I would consider mainstream adolescent culture. (John)

In informal talk, students take on and fulfill different speaker roles (i.e., instigator, orchestrator, comic, reinforcer, storyteller, interpreter) which relate both to their personality and the group's dynamic. (Andrea)

Teachers can shape their language to student "standards" outside of the classroom (e.g., moving from complete, grammatical sentences or questions to shortened, expressive phrases or comments) to prevent their exclusion from student talk. (Andrea) Those efforts model for students how they might adapt their own language to different situations. (Peg's response to Andrea)

In one episode of informal talk, students "play by the same rules" about who speaks next, what is considered a "taboo" topic, and how to tease one another without hurting someone's feelings. (Andrea)

Even if students are aware of grammar rules and can apply them appropriately, they don't always reflect that knowledge in their everyday speech. (Andrea)

Informal talk is context-dependent. (Andrea)

In an informal conversation among students from the same racial/ethnic background, subtle racial jokes are tolerated. (Sharon)

In one conversation, the males tended to ask questions and leave the floor open for jokes, effectively directing the conversation in spite of one female participant's efforts to bring in her viewpoints. (Sharon)

In informal talk, speakers sharing a common context and experience don't explain all of their references. (Rachel)

In one informal conversation, because the students are very serious about the "love triangle" under discussion, the teacher also takes the situation seriously, even if she thinks it is silly/immature. (Rachel)

"You know," "I mean," and "like" overpopulate students' informal conversations. (Bill G.)

Students seem to enjoy using vocal quotation marks to highlight their own words and thoughts, to provide color and depth to their language (i.e., "I mean it's not like, 'Hey, this is great reading!'" "I'll stop and I'll be like, 'It's time for a cigarette and coffee'"). (Bill G.)

During informal talk, there seems to be no restriction about commenting on one person's thoughts while that person is still speaking. The overlapping sections are usually followed by a pause as the group determines who should pick up the conversational "ball." (Bill G.)

Informal dialogue sometimes reflects a hierarchy among the participants with power being placed in the hands of those who set the standards for turn-taking and on-task behaviors. (Bill G.)

During informal conversation, speakers understand ambiguous statements due to the context for their talk. (Margie)

These kids essentially speak in a normal manner (i.e., the mainstream language) with some typically rural Southern habits: dropping of consonants or syllables (gon' = going, 'at = that, 'cause = because); contracting two or more words into one (y'all = you all, dju = did you, idn't it = is it not); Southern drawl pronunciation (hayid = head, cain't = can't); Southern grammatical errors (Me an' Cindy rode it = Cindy and I rode it; Her arm weren't no bigger ... = Her arm was not any bigger). (Bill Mc)

Students didn't realize how many "filler" words they used until they helped me transcribe and heard all the many expressions such as, "I mean...," "uh," "he's, he's, he's...," "yeah and...," "and see...," "uh huh," "and so...," and "'n." (Elaine)

I was interested to see how one of these students might speak differently if he had to give a formal presentation—a field trip proposal. The student started off with grammatically correct English, and there were few errors. However, the longer he talked, the more the clipped words, wrong tenses, and slang emerged. Then, at the very end, he tried to resume his "formality." Because he was concentrating so much on speaking correctly, he lost some of his zest and expression, and his message wasn't as effective. (Elaine) More "safe" practice runs like this one might provide him with the opportunities he needs to become more expressive and comfortable with changes of register. (Peg's response to Elaine)

Language Change Across Time/Slang

I noticed the frequent use of the word "like" for purposes other than the intended definition. First, "like" appears to be often used as a filler word to buy time (much like "uh"). Second, "like" (in conjunction with a form of be) is often used to replace the word, "said." For instance, in one excerpt of my transcript, the following phrase, "and that lady was like no I cain't," conveyed the same sense as "and that lady said 'No I cain't.'" (Bill Mc)

Informal conversation invites the use of terms heard on television and movies, such as "punk," "bingo," "Win it boy," "Take 'em out," and "What the hell is this?" This "cool" terminology changes all the time. When I was young the "cool" terms were, "excellent, psyche, not, cool beans, whateva, no da, man, fag, goober, nerd, and dork." (Margie)

Teaching Implications

I did notice that the turn-taking in this class's conversation leads to an escalation of the volume of the noise, as each tries to muscle in on the action of the conversation by talking a little louder than the person currently talking. The males are generally more apt to speak out, a significant point in a class where there are four males and eight females. (John) Classroom research supports that gender is a factor in who gains teachers' attention. (Peg's response to John)

Also of some concern is the pattern of who usually talks and who usually doesn't. I know the primary concern of this was language analysis, but far more important to me is who speaks and who doesn't. It will help me down the line as I design group work and try to call on those who don't usually speak out. (John)

Given the homogeneous nature of the language at MCHS, these kids might need some exercises in the diversity of language (in much the same manner as exercises in racial, religious, and political diversity). (Bill Mc)

It's like I told my students, I'm not trying to make a radical reform or wear an imaginary hat that says "grammar patrol"; I'm trying to make them understand that in the real world, they will be judged by their language. It will serve as a representation of their intelligence in real life situations such as job interviews. (Elaine)

I understand that a person's language belongs to their culture, but a standard language is the only language accepted outside their culture. A teacher who has a common understanding of both languages will have a better understanding of his/her class. Student's language is a part of their adolescent culture. To understand a student's culture is to understand the language a student practices. (Margie)

In one mixed race informal group, the African American student's language was distinguishable from other participants' due to his grammatical choices ("I'm beating man and I gots one more game."). (Margie)

Group work can be modified after pinpointing the strong player/participants in the classroom. They can have an effect on standard-setting within the group and on-task/off-task behaviors. (Bill G.)

Students have heard and imitate adult language but are not that skilled at using it yet, especially in very serious conversations about such things as relationships. (Rachel)

Language and Community

In one homogeneous classroom, the students' speech and opinions seem reflective of their affluent community. (Sharon)

Storytelling

Students can gain recognition or draw attention to themselves by recounting humorous and elaborate stories. (Andrea)

APPENDIX G

Student Writer Case Studies
Due October 25

Student Cases

Select two students who represent extremes in their attitudes toward writing—one who writes avidly, another who resists writing.

Data Suggestions

Writing Samples:

Collect samples of writing from the two students you have identified, in an effort to gain insight into their level of proficiency, patterns of strengths and weaknesses, topic choices, favored genres, types of elaborations, etc.

Feedback on Writing:

Collect samples of the kind of feedback these students have been given.

- What patterns of response seem to emerge?
- How are the student writers encouraged or supported?

Classroom Observations:

- What do these students do when they have time to write in class?
- What kinds of writing technology do they prefer (computer, paper, and pencil)?
- Do they indulge in any writing "rituals"?
- Are they comfortable letting others read their writing?

Interviews:

Set up an interview to solicit information about the student writers' attitudes toward writing, their insights into their own writing processes, the purposes for learning to write, their goals for writing, etc.

Analysis

- What insights do you gain by talking to students about how they perceive themselves as writers?
- What do student writers identify as most productive practices? Least productive practices? Why?
- How does that align with your experiences as a high school writer? With which student writer do you identify most closely?
- What patterns emerge across diverse student profiles?
- Of what value is this information to teaching and learning? How might it inform your own practice?

APPENDIX H

Analysis Of Data From Less Enthusiastic/Proficient High School Writers

Describe basic demographics of each participant in analysis:

Researcher #1 (Name _____):

Researcher #2 (Name _____):

Student #1 (Pseudonym _____):

Student #2 (Pseudonym _____):

Look at and talk through all of your interviews and student papers. As you do, keep a jot list of things that strike you or that you notice. When you are finished, list here the top 10 points which strike you. **Be VERY specific; if possible, quote your data exactly as we did in Language Project Excerpts**. Write clearly enough for a typist to copy your words.

What strikes you? What do you notice?	**As a result of what you noticed, what advice would you give teachers of writing?**
1.	
2.	

3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

APPENDIX I

Excerpt from
Analysis of Writers' Autobiographies
and Data from More Proficient Writers

Fall 1994

DATA AND FINDINGS

What strikes you? What do you notice?	As a result of what you noticed, what advice would you give teachers of writing?
Students usually revised their writing after its completion (if student corrects as they write, he/she has very little problem with control and fluency).	Teachers must realize that it's easier for students who correct as they write to revise afterward than vice versa. For students who revise afterward the fluency may be stunted if forced to revise during the project.
Students enjoy having their work displayed (and excerpts read) for/to others.	Teachers should try to find good points in students' writing to share with class, thus allowing feedback.
Trying to write in one sitting can cause frustration and stop fluency.	Writing should be long-term assignment; it should be a process that students can build on.
Students many times use writing as method to work through problems.	Teachers can use journals as way to answer questions.
Some students like "jot lists" and others don't.	Teachers should allow students to organize their thoughts in a way that is best for the students.
Students sometimes feel that their ideas are stupid.	Teachers should encourage to write any/all ideas because they are important to the writing process.
Students don't like it when they are penalized for minor mistakes (this discourages writing).	Teacher should try to focus more on content when grading.
Restrictive forms, such as the five-paragraph essay, created apprehension for Ginny. It limited the need for voice, elaboration, and detail. It took a long time to overcome. No Fluency. For Andrea, restrictive forms (8th-grade grammar only) shifted fluency and creativity that she once had. "I was studying mostly grammar and correctness. My teacher pushed these skills so much that I forgot writing had meaning to it."	Don't stress forms to the exclusion of writer's own voice. Make fluency the first issue. Let students choose personal topics of interests so that when we teach grammar it will be in the context of writing. Write first, correct later. Fluency first. Show students that writing has meaning first.

Excerpt from
Analysis of Writers' Autobiographies
and Data from Less Proficient Writers

Fall 1994

DATA AND FINDINGS

What strikes you? What do you notice?	As a result of what you noticed, what advice would you give teachers of writing?
Didn't like to read; no personal habits of reading at home or out of class. No connection of reading choices with personal writing style.	Students who develop a love for reading seem to be avid writers, and the reverse is true. As teachers, we read to give students a love for reading.
No developed writing rituals. These students haven't developed a full sense of themselves as writers and aren't fluent with writing enough to have habits associated with writing.	Create fluency in students by having them write a lot.
They had nothing to say in interviews, whereas avid writers loved to answer questions about writing.	Help students to be comfortable talking about writing—get students familiar with writing fluently so that it's really a part of their routine.
The less successful writer had very good examples of writing; however, she did not perform as well without direction and did not like creative writing.	Be clear with instructions and make fluency and routine a part of their everyday lives.

APPENDIX J

Reader Profile/Autobiography

Purpose

Teacher candidates often tell us, "I want to become an English teacher because I always liked to read literature." Others explain, "I want to become an English teacher because I always hated reading in school." The reading autobiography acts as a kind of narrative inquiry into one of several literacies that we deem important to the language arts classroom. In other words, it will help you to recall where you started as a reader, what triggered your interest or dampened your motivation as a reader, how you negotiated the differences between the reading you did at home and at school. By reminding yourself of that developmental process and examining how your development may or may not translate to the experiences of most student readers, you place yourself in the position to draw better inferences about your students as readers and writers.

Audience

Researcher-classmates will benefit from hearing the stories of different learner-reader's development in conjunction with the data they bring about student readers in their own classrooms. Colleagues should come away from the piece feeling that they have a little better insight into the kind of reader you have become, the forces influencing you along the way, your beliefs about reading and readers that grow from your experiences, and the implications those experiences have for practice.

Procedure

1. You only have a week to write the reading autobiography, so you'll want to get started soon. Consider the scope of the paper. Do you want to focus on only the highlights of your reading experiences? Do you want to give a blow-by-blow description of every event that has influenced you? Every teacher? Every book? Every turning point? Do you want to relate your history in some sort of chronological order or do you have something else in mind? If you think about your material, you can probably make some of these decisions about organizing principles.

2. Most of you have an emerging sense of your own writing process, but if you have trouble getting started and don't know what to write, you may want to consider some of the following ideas:

a) Write several 20-minute freewrites that focus on various stages of your reading history or turning points in that history.

b) Begin "Well, it seems to me that...." Sometimes a more informal, personal approach will open the floodgates for you.

c) Brainstorm a list of things you might want to include in your personal reading history. Cluster those items into categories that might provide a working outline for your writing.

d) Talk to a partner. Let your conversation begin with some book talk—what you've read most recently, the book you want to read next, your opinion of the movie based on a book you liked, the title you've read that you disliked, etc.

3. Once you have some drafting done, share those scribblings with a trusted reader. Think about some questions or concerns that you might like the reader to address for you in his/her response.

4. Consider those suggestions. Decide if you need to go back to brainstorm more ideas, delete, elaborate, whatever. And then try again. Remember that writing is a recursive process, not a neat linear sequence for everyone.

The writer profiles have been terrific. If you find it beneficial to set up an elaborated "list" that allows you to pinpoint important ideas without worrying about transitions and connections, by all means, adopt that approach. The form is completely up to you.

APPENDIX K

Excerpt from
Analysis of Readers' Autobiographies
and Data from Readers' Surveys and Interviews

Fall 1994

HEADING: School Reading	Implications for Teaching
Kelli Carter/Andrea Bottoms: The "books at school" or "school literature" brought thoughts of "boring headaches" to their mind.	• LIMIT FACT TESTS • FOCUS ON CLASSROOM DISCUSSION • LET THEM HAVE THEIR OWN OPINION • WE (TEACHERS) NEED TO TRY TO FIND WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS FIND OWN MEANINGS AND UNIVERSAL MEANINGS
Kelli/Andrea: Some students do not enjoy elements of assigned classroom reading because of vocabulary difficulties.	
Ginny Speaks/Margie Lacy: From fifteen surveys, nine students state they *liked* to read; but when asked if they enjoyed assigned reading, nine students stated no. They did not like the idea of a time limit and they must read it whether they liked it or not.	
Ginny/Margie: When I was in high school, I was like these students. I did not like assigned reading, too. Most of the time I cheated and read the Cliff Notes. I enjoyed reading most when I took my own time to do it.	
Ginny/Margie: Once reading became more time-consuming in school, I read less on my own. I guess I developed those "habits" that tell students to read for facts, extract some absolute correct meaning out of the text, and be prepared to regurgitate it at any time. It really tainted my whole outlook on reading.	

HEADING: Motivation	Implications for Teaching
Jeff Anderson/Brian O'Conner: Students read what interests them. Suspense is a big motivation for reading. A number of students mentioned horror, mystery, and adventure novels.	• PROVIDE CHOICE IN ASSIGNMENTS • INCORPORATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT PROVE TO BE RELEVENT TO THE STUDENTS' LIVES • STUDENTS SHOULD BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST THEMSELVES (READING/WRITING WORKSHOPS, INDIVIDUAL BOOK REPORTS)
Elaine Perry/Greg Slattery: Students prefer contemporary works as opposed to "classics." (David: "*To Kill a Mockingbird* was great, and *The Scarlet Letter* sucks.")	
Elaine/Greg: Some students prefer novels to short stories. (Mira: "You can get into it....You have more detail....You get more out of it...." Jeremy: "A short story can leave you guessing about characters.")	
Jeff A/Brian: Students read books related to their own personalities. Athletes read the sports page and *Sports Illustrated*. "Sappy" girls enjoy romance novels.	
Elaine/Greg: Some students will stick to a book even if they don't like it. (These students were very motivated. Jeremy: "I skip that chapter—the only boring one—and keep going ...")	
Jeff A/Brian: Most students feel that there is a big difference between reading in and out of class. Reading out of class was for enjoyment or concern for grades or other academic pressures.	
Elaine/Greg: Many students prefer reading magazines to novels. Most of the students interviewed who were not readers always read magazines.	

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